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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Fine and Applied Arts
in Candidacy for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Identity Mark Evaluation and Organization Project

BY

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Thesis Proposal for the Master of Fine Arts Degree.

The purpose of this Thesis is to examine, evaluate and present information and examples of the different types of identity marks used by businesses and other organizations. I intend to study previous systems and theories for identifying and organizing identity marks and combine these with my own ideas and develop a logical, coherent classification system for identity marks.

The findings of the research, which will be presented in an educational format, will:

- a) Describe and categorize the different types of identity marks.
- b) Present information on how the different kinds of businesses and organizations influence the classification and choice of identity mark.
- c) Apply Semiotics as a method of evaluating identity marks.

The final project will be either in a print media format, or an audio-visual form. It will be illustrated with examples of my own work in identity marks, using previously created marks, and marks created specifically for use in this Thesis.

Chief Adviser: Roger Remington

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Introduction

It is perhaps best to begin with the reasons why I chose this subject as my graduate Thesis. It is not a new area of graphic design, as a matter of fact it may be the oldest. It is not currently entering a new phase of its development. The area of Identity Marks could, however, be considered a condensed version of the field of graphic design. The design of Identity Marks crosses through the fields of typography, advertising, art, printing and photography. It runs the range of graphic elements such as line, shape, and negative/positive areas. Identity Marks are perhaps the most self contained aspect of graphic design. They must be unified and balanced, both on their own and in a visual environment. They attempt to communicate concrete and abstract ideas to a mass audience in a simple, universal way. Identity Marks must solve visual problems to be successful; they must be aesthetically pleasing, easily and properly understood, and able to be practically applied.

If we look at Identity Marks in this sense, we can see that their design could be placed near the center of the design world. Identity Mark design allows for so many different solutions because of the many approaches that one can take to create a mark. They can be commercial, artistic, typo-graphic, abstract, traditional, photographic, illustrative or a combination of these and other elements.

It can be seen that the area of mark design is much more complex than what is seen on the surface. My

experiences in this area led me to believe that this complexity could be simplified. My original hypothesis then became two-fold: a) that there exists no organized system of identifying and categorizing Marks or, if there is one, it is not universally accepted or it is not applicable to the world of designers, and b) it is possible to create order out of chaos and develop my own system of classification that could simplify the terminology of Identity Marks.

My Thesis rested on research proving the above hypothesis right or wrong. I covered a wide range of sources, from graphic designers to business people and legal people. This information (see Bibliography for sources) proved my original thoughts to be accurate. Just as I had never come across a consistent use of terminology through my educational experiences, there was also no truly simplified systems in use. There were systems, or what appeared to be systems, but they were either not geared to the designer, haphazardly put together, or inconsistent and confusing in their usage and terminology. With this hypothesis proven to my benefit, I could move on to develop my own system of classification.

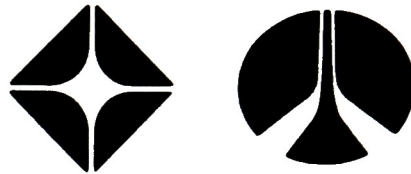
Process

The first step was to write the text that was to be the cornerstone of the piece. It was important that I write the text as the initial step, because I wanted to first be able to determine and create exactly the content and amount of information I wanted to include and design around that, rather than create a design or layout and try to fit the amount of information to that.

My initial research served two functions; to observe whether or not there were adequate classification systems, and to gather information for my own system. The information was collected in three areas; the history and evolution of marks, types of marks and their uses, and the methods and criteria for evaluating the mark. The major part of the research was geared toward types of marks and their uses.

My method of research consisted of collecting terminology used by people in the field. The first step was to group marks by their visual characteristics (Fig. 1). These nine groups, or categories, served as "collectors" for the terms found in process of research. I was now able to match the visual categories with the different terms used by the authors and designers and be able to group these terms into my "collector" groups. The categories and their collected terms were now broken down as follows:

Group 1 Marks of abstract form:



Group 2 Abstracted letterforms:



Group 3 Pictorial Mark:



Group 4 Initials in type:

IBM AVAX

Group 5 Initials in field or shape:



Group 6 Name in type:

EXON Knotts
BERRY FARM

Group 7 Name in field or shape:



Group 8 Name with graphic:



Group 9 Mark with name in type:



(Fig. 1)

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Identity Marks:

Overall terminology

marks, logos, symbols, trademarks, logotypes,
symbolic marks, identity marks, sig cut,
identification marks, insignia.

GROUP 1 Marks of abstract form.

abstract construction, abstract, abstract
symbol, emblem, interpretive symbol,
allegorical mark.

GROUP 2 Marks of Abstracted letterforms.

alphaglyph.

GROUP 3 Marks of pictorial forms.

logogram, pictograph, pictogram, pictorial
symbol, glyph, icon, figurative mark,
conventional symbol, product oriented mark,
product mark, service mark, literal
illustrative.

GROUP 4 Initials or acronym of organization in typographic form

monogram, graphic symbol, initial letters,
acronym, lettermark.

GROUP 5 Initials or acronym of organization in typographic form in a field or shape.

monoseal.

GROUP 6 Full word or words in typographic form.

logotype, wordmark, signature, logo.

GROUP 7 Full word or words in typographic form in a field or shape.

seal.

GROUP 8 Typographic mark combined with graphic.

combination symbol, combination mark,
signature, name and design together.

GROUP 9 Mark with identifying name in typographic form.

signature.

The next step was to begin to evaluate, combine and eliminate the nine groups listed above. The first three groups were left unchanged, while Groups 4 and 5 were combined, as well as Groups 6 and 7. This left the following seven groups, as based on visual characteristics:

Group 1: Marks of abstracted forms.

Group 2: Marks of abstracted letterforms.

Group 3: Marks of forms which represent actual objects.

Group 4: Marks of initials or acronym of organization.

Group 5: Marks of full word or words of organization.

Group 6: Marks of name or initials of organization
combined with graphic mark or element in a
cohesive manner.

Group 7: Marks of organization mark, either
typographical or symbolic, with full name of
organization.

These groups became the final seven classifications. The next step was to evaluate the terms collected in the research and select one term for each group that would best label that group. The factors that were considered in the selection included: a) Does the term accurately and clearly describe the visual characteristic of that group? b) Is one of the terms already more recognized and understood than the others in identifying the group? Terms that appeared in two or more of the groups were avoided, in order to keep away from any chance of confusion.

The final seven groups were then divided into two sub-groups, marks which were based on symbolic forms (Groups 1-3), and marks based on typographic forms (Groups 4-7). The following sections will explain the choices and rationale behind the choice of each group name.

Group 1: This group was fairly easy to label, as roughly half of the terms found contained the word abstract. It proved to be the most applicable and commonly used term to describe the non-illustrative, non-pictorial marks included in this category. Group 1 became **Abstract Symbols**.

Group 2: This group was not included or discussed as a separate category by many of the research sources, but instead lumped together with Abstract Symbols. Through researching and viewing so many marks, I found that the

frequency of appearance of marks from this group warranted its separate inclusion. Abstracted letterforms are not only visually different from Abstract Symbols, but the concept is based on abstracting a recognizable form, a letter. Because the letterform is usually still recognizable, this type of mark runs the risk of confusion with a typographic mark. The difference is in the actual abstraction of the letterform. This group of marks uses a letterform as a basis for a shape of shapes, and can fall anywhere on the range of abstraction. Typographic marks usually contain two or more letters, whereas the marks of this group generally use only one letterform. Typographic marks also are a more literal and understandable form of the letter. Because this group was not generally acknowledged as a separate group, only one term, alphaglyph, was found in research. Since I thought that this was not a common term, I took the descriptive term abstracted letterform, dropped the word abstracted, and settled for the term **Letterform Symbol**.

Group 3: This group contains marks which represent people, places or objects that identify a product or organization. Pictographs and Pictograms were accurate terms but did not fit in with terms decided upon for Groups 1 and 2. Product Mark was too limiting a term, and Literal Illustrative does not adequately represent

any mark that is graphically rendered. It came down to the terms Figurative and Pictorial, and Pictorial was thought to more accurately describe the group, so Group 3 was labeled as **Pictorial Symbols**.

Group 4: This group was placed in the sub-section of typographic marks. It consists of marks in which the name of the organization is presented in a shortened version, usually as initials or as an acronym. The label Monogram tended to be too limiting and also a term more associated with a different meaning. Initial Letters and Acronym each only dealt with a part of the group. **Lettermark** was chosen because it accurately describes the mark (a mark consisting of letters), and is also more commonly in use.

Group 5: In choosing a name for this group common usage was a more overwhelming factor than accurate labeling. Wordmark would have been a more accurate term, and would have related well with Lettermark, but Logotype was by far the most commonly used term in the group, and of all the groups. With the use of the label **Logotype** already so widespread, the issue of practicality prevailed, and so Group 5 became Logotypes.

Groups 6 and 7 are theoretically hybrid marks which combine the typographic mark and the symbol mark. However since the inclusion of typographic elements was the common denominator for these groups, these groups were included with the Typographic Mark sub-section.

Group 6: Group 6 can easily be confused with Group 7, but if the essentials are understood, these groups are easy to differentiate. This group contains marks which combine a typographic mark with a graphic element in a cohesive manner. It is important to note that this mark is combined in an interrelated manner, and that the typography is not used as a label. The graphic element can range from an symbol that is also used on its own, (Fig.2) to an element which is simply a flourish or decorative device (Fig.3). **Combination Mark** was chosen because of its wide recognition and for its accurate description of this type of mark.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Group 7: This group contains marks which consist of two separate elements; the mark of the organization, which

exists on its own, and the name of the organization in typographic form. The organization mark, which can either be a symbol mark or typographic mark, is used as the Identity Mark of the organization. The typography consists of the full name of the organization. The Identity Mark (Fig.4) is the dominant visual element and the typography serves as a label or 'signature' (Fig.5) of the organization. **Signature** accurately describes the mark and is also a commonly used term for this group, and so became the term for Group 7.



Fig. 4



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Fig. 5

To recap, the groups now exist and are labeled as follows:

- Group 1: Abstract Symbols
- Group 2: Letterform Symbols
- Group 3: Pictorial Symbols
- Group 4: Lettermarks
- Group 5: Logotype
- Group 6: Combination Mark
- Group 7: Signature

Text

The division of marks into the seven groups made the organization of the text material much easier. As indicated previously, the text was divided into three sections, history and evolution of marks, types of marks and their uses, and methods and criteria for mark evaluation. Text for the history and evolution of marks was fairly straight forward. It was structured around the chronological evolution of marks, and emphasized any social or business factors which influenced mark style or usage. The text on types and usage of marks was divided into a Symbol section (Groups 1-3), and a Typographic Marks section (Groups 4-7). Each group was individually defined and discussed according to the advantages and disadvantages of the use. The Evaluation section was also subdivided; one section consisted of business and financial considerations of mark selection, and a second section deals with the design requirements and functions of the mark. Semiotics, a logical system for solving visual problems, is very applicable to this section, and was included.

The following is the text of the Thesis exactly as it appears on the final piece.

Identity Marks

History

Man has been using visual symbols to communicate long before he could read or write. Marks became a way to identify goods as being owned or made by one person. The use of marks on objects to identify the maker dates as far back as ancient Greece, where potters marks found on articles are believed to be 4,000 years old. As trade across the Mediterranean increased, so did the use of identity marks. Brickmakers in Egypt placed their mark on every brick they made. Soapmakers in Rome were fined for selling unbranded soap. The makers of porcelain put their name in a semi-circle as their mark. Stonecutters' marks have been found which used motifs of crescent moons, wheels, grape leaves and other simple motifs.

With the advent of 12th century Medieval society in Europe, trade flourished and marks were then used to distinguish between merchants and producers. Commerce marks, which were affixed on trade documents, were used by merchants. Linear representations of the merchants name were common. These not only served as a mark of ownership, in case of shipwreck or piracy, but as a way to communicate the fame and wealth of the merchant.

Producers' marks have been required by law in England since the end of the 12th century. Silversmiths put marks on their works which made it possible to trace the makers' name, the year the piece was made and the place of assay. In 1363,

King Edward III ordered that metal workers were to use distinctive marks to identify their work. With the formation of guilds, various guild marks were designed and used in accordance with guild regulations. As guilds became more numerous in the late 14th century, the use of producers' marks spread into western Europe. The information conveyed by the marks included materials and processes used. Its mandatory use was to guard against unauthorized production and sale, and to assure that a work of poor quality could be traced back to the maker.

Other uses of symbols and marks were seen in this era. Noblemen had their heraldry and coats of arms, the Army had its' regimental banners and badges, and religion had its' own set of symbols. Because of the high rate of illiteracy, symbols and marks were practical as well as decorative.

The Industrial Revolution signaled a change in identity marks. Big business and the machine era made it essential that a company identify their products from those of its' competitors. The Chicago World's Fair of 1893 introduced new designs, inventions, and manufacturers to millions of people and the rush was on to identify these products. The founding families of corporations drew from their family background, travel, their knowledge in the arts and mythology, and native humor to visually identify their products. Note the multitude of family named businesses in the U.S., and the large number of trade figures, such as Buster Brown, the Smith Brothers, or Elsie, the Borden Cow.

The idea of a uniform corporate look originated in Europe prior to World War I. In Germany, when AEG, the nationwide electric company, expanded into other areas, Peter Behrens designed a typographical mark that combined artistic form with machine form. This was further developed by the influence of the Bauhaus, which stripped away decoration and historic associations from design forms. Letterforms and marks were now constructed with rulers and compasses, a cleaner style for mass communication. In Italy, Adriano Olivetti, a patron of the arts, realized that a program of design, if applied to every aspect of his company, could influence both worker morale and public attitudes.

After World War II efforts were increased to sell American business on design as a sales tool. New marks were created and old ones 'cleaned up'. The 1950's and '60's saw a further development of corporate identity, as an unprecedented number of companies decided to update their corporate symbols. Part of this can be attributed to the growing number of mergers and acquisitions in the business world. Most companies were previously named either after their founders, or their major product. With mergers and acquisitions, the company mark, and sometimes the company name was obsolete.

The increase in mark design was also helped by the new corporate image-consciousness. Hand in hand with this went the desire to modernize their image and mark. If marks created years before looked out of date, they were redesigned

in order to keep up with the times and to better express the new found size and complexity of corporate status. The 1960's also saw a new emphasis on the corporate name as an identity element. Company names were shortened or initialized in order to make names more memorable and decorative. By the late '60's, typographic marks and abstract marks were predominant, despite the fact that the nature or business of the company was not always evident in these marks.

The early 1970's were a time of low corporate profile. The backlash against big industry and their abstract symbolism caused companies to try for a personal and carefully crafted look. Employing a more casual style, marks became more hand-lettered and embellished. However the mid-seventies brought back the heavy, abstracted look of corporate symbolism, and with it, another increase in mark design. Names continued to be shortened or abbreviated, and new, hi-tech names and marks came into use.

Some corporations, however, sought to return to their past, to try to bring back some of the old fashioned values embraced by the public. Trade figures such as the Green Giant, or the Planters Peanut Man were now heavily backed and promoted by their companies. The reaction of small and medium-sized businesses was also changed. In the '60's, as large corporations unveiled their abstract marks, the smaller businesses followed, with abstract marks that were not always suitable for their purposes. In the early 1980's there has

been a swing to more detailed mark designs for the small and medium-sized business, designs which represent products whenever possible.

Identity marks are now in use in almost every type of organization, as interest is no longer confined to industry. With the popularity and usefulness of identity marks, all types of organizations have found that a good visual image can increase public recognition. As Thomas Watson Jr., chairman of IBM once said, "Good design is good business."

Symbols

Symbols are marks which function without words or type to convey its message. The message must be conveyed visually, and be understood by mass audiences. Symbols can range from an abstract image to an illustrative image of an actual object or person. In all cases it is important to remember that the mark must communicate all of its information visually. While some symbols are used in conjunction with the name of the organization, the symbol must be able to stand on its own as the visual representation of the organization and its philosophy. Symbols can attract and have quick impact on a viewer, but the viewer must be able to understand and correctly relate the symbol with the organization. Symbols can be broken down into the following categories:

Abstract

Abstract symbols are symbols that are not pictorial, that is they do not represent an actual object. A majority are based on geometric shapes, and are usually bold, clean and simple. Abstract symbols are mainly related to large corporations with ownership of several smaller companies. They will usually have no direct visual connection with organization name or product. Instead, an abstract symbol will try to convey a positive association with the organization, its products or services, and its philosophies.

Advantages

Abstract symbols can convey a sense of prestige to a company because of its corporate implications. Good abstract symbols are unique and distinctive and can be identified more quickly than a mark that must be read. Careful use of negative and positive space can, through visual reversal, create a more memorable image and give the symbol a double visual meaning.

Disadvantages

Abstract symbols need heavy audience exposure for high recognition, which becomes a costly promotional expense. Abstract symbols may be misunderstood by people of different backgrounds and some people feel that they are too cold and impersonal. If the symbol is not unique it may cause confusion with abstract symbols of other organizations and have a low recognition factor.

Letterform

Letterform symbols are symbols most commonly based on a single letterform. There are a few exceptions, which consist of 2 or 3 highly abstracted letterforms. The high level of abstraction differentiates these marks from typographic lettermarks. The majority of Letterform symbols are, however, of a single letterform. They can range from a highly abstracted representation of the letterform to a slightly altered symbol in which the letterform is easily identifiable. Letterform symbols are often considered as abstract symbols, but the spread in its use as a more recognizable form of an abstract symbol warrants its separate inclusion. Letterform symbols have the advantages of abstract symbols, but are more personal and recognizable. Almost always the first initial of an organizations' name, they are used mainly in large businesses, and conversely enough, for sports franchises.

Advantages

Letterform symbols are very versatile and can cover a wide range of approaches from highly abstract to almost pictorial. The letterform adds a high recognition factor to the symbol and gives a further relationship with the organization name. Letterform symbols are also more personal than an abstracted form. Alteration of the letterform can add images, meanings, and associations beyond just the letterform.

Disadvantages

While not as costly to promote as an abstract symbol, letterform symbols still need a high number of exposures for recognition. It may come in competition with other marks based on the same letter. Unlike abstract symbols, letterform symbols, which base the mark on the particular shape of a letterform, may limit the number of approaches available to the designer.

Pictorial

Pictorial symbols are symbols based on a visual representation of actual objects. The pictorial symbol may represent a person, animal or object and can be specific or general in its imagery. This type of symbol is highly recognizable, but needs to be tied with the organization name and purpose in a logical sense, in order for the correct message to be conveyed. Pictorial symbols may range from a clean, simplified graphic rendering, to a illustrative, realistic rendering.

Advantages

Pictorial symbols, especially those of long-associated trade figures, are the most personal and recognizable of the symbol categories. For smaller organizations or services, the pictorial symbol can visually and literally show their specific product or service. The designer can use a wide range of treatment

in representing the image from an abstracted rendition to a literal rendition.

Disadvantages

The subject of a pictorial symbol must have a logical tie-in with the organization. If not, confusion may result, with the organization needing to heavily promote the mark in order to make it understood. If the pictorial symbol is done with a complex, illustrative treatment, the symbol may not reproduce well in smaller sizes. As with other symbols, a pictorial symbol needs a relatively high level of exposure in order to insure a high level of recognition.

Typographic Marks

Typographic Marks include any mark in which the name of the organization is represented in typographic form. These marks are highly recognizable and need less exposure than symbols because the company name is presented in word form. Typographic marks are used in almost every category of business and organization. The typeface used in these may be a standard face, or a face designed especially for the mark. With the number of existing typefaces, and the possibility of creating a new face, the variety of approaches to typographic mark design is very broad.

Lettermark

Lettermarks are marks in which the initials or acronym of an organization are formed by two or more letters. In most cases the shortened version of the name is more recognizable than the formal name. Because the Lettermark usually consists of few letters, often the typeforms can be more distinctively designed than type used from an existing typeface. More easily recognized and understood than symbols, Lettermarks are used by a wide range of organizations.

Advantages

The initials or acronym that make up the Lettermark are usually more recognizable than the full organization name. Lettermarks are less visually complex than marks using full words, and are usually easier to handle. The typeforms in Lettermarks can be treated as separate elements, since the mark doesn't have to be read as a cohesive word unit. Lettermarks use typographic forms, which already have certain associations built into them.

Disadvantages

Some people feel that initials and acronyms are too impersonal. The association with shortened corporate names can sometimes be negative. Lettermarks have to compete in a design environment full of typeforms, so good Lettermarks need to be both distinctive and legible, in order to avoid confusion.

Logotype

A Logotype is a typographic mark in which the organization name is expressed in one or more words. This mark allows for very high recognition as the full name is presented to the viewer. It also has the highest range of applications, from corporations to restaurants. The typography can either be designed specifically for the mark, or taken from an existing typeface. Since the Logotype is pronounceable, it adds a phonic dimension to the mark. The Logotype is best used by organizations who have distinctive names, or have little money or opportunity to promote their mark.

Advantages

The Logotype is easy to promote and easily recognized, since it clearly spells out the name of the organization. Since it can be rendered in an existing typeface or a specially created one, the designer is given a wide range of imagery to work with. The Logotype is good for organizations in which the name gives an indication of the products or services offered.

Disadvantages

Logotypes must fight for attention with all the other type in the visual environment. Logotypes of multiple or lengthy words may incur some type relationship problems. They must balance between being distinctive and being readable. Logotypes consisting of long or multiple words may also become too complex

and illegible at smaller sizes. Some confusion may result between Logotypes using similar typefaces.

Combination Marks

A Combination Mark is a mark which incorporates both a Typographic Mark and a graphic element. The typographic mark can be a Lettermark or Logotype, while the graphic element can be from any of the Symbol categories. The Combination Mark cohesively combines the Symbol and the typography, and is sometimes confused with the Signature. It allows for instant recognition of the Symbol, and the addition of the Symbol to the Typographic Mark can make the mark more distinctive and memorable.

Advantages

The Combination Mark gives the Symbol a higher level of recognition. In some cases the Symbol is used both as a part of a Combination Mark, and alone as the organization mark. Since the organization name is present, the Symbol need not have a direct visual relationship with the organization name, product or service. The Symbol helps to enhance the typography, and makes the mark stand out from a strictly typographic mark.

Disadvantages

The use of both a Symbol and a Typographic Mark may be redundant. The Combination Mark may be too complex if both elements are complex, or awkward if the elements

are visually incompatible. If the Symbol or Typographic Mark is used separately, a Combination Mark may cause confusion because of the existence of different versions of the same basic mark.

Signature

Signatures are similar to, and often confused with Combination Marks. It consists of the organization mark, symbolic or typographic in nature, presented with the full, official name of the organization. The mark is used on its own in most applications, but it is labeled with the organizations' full name for certain applications. The name is usually rendered in a clean, simple typeface, so it doesn't compete with the mark itself. Signatures are used with both Symbol marks and Typographic Marks.

Advantages

Signatures allow the organization to present their name with their mark. This provides a link between the organization name and mark, and is useful for situations in which the full name must be presented with the mark.

Disadvantages

The effectiveness and attractiveness of marks are sometimes decreased with the addition of typography. A Signature with a Typographic Mark may be redundant and long organization names may be too visually complex. Care must be taken to insure that the typography does not compete with the mark.

Evaluation

Identity Marks need to be evaluated in two different categories. The mark first needs to be examined by how appropriate the type of mark is in relation to organizational needs and applications. Second, the mark needs to be evaluated in regard to aesthetic considerations and design requirements.

Certain types of organizations lend themselves to particular types of marks. Organizations which seek a more personal image should think more towards a Typographic Mark. This also applied for organizations in which their name relates to or reveals the nature of the organization, its products or services. Organizations with a variety of interests or subsidiaries should think along the lines of an Abstract Symbol. This list of considerations goes on and on, and is unique to every organization.

One of the most important considerations involving the choice of marks involves the organizational budget. Certain types of marks need constant and frequent exposure in order to be effective and recognizable. Symbols and non-typographic marks fall into the category of marks that need large amounts of promotion dollars. Typographic Marks or literal Pictorial Symbols need less exposure, and therefore less dollars. The design of Identity Marks has become big business for graphic designers, and a good design firm can help to design an attractive, effective and appropriate mark.

The second area of evaluation is in the design qualities of the mark. An effective, organized way to accomplish this is through the system of Semiotics. Semiotics is a rational system for the analysis of design and communication problems. The system is divided into three components, each of which deals a particular area of evaluation.

Semantic

The semantic aspect of a mark involves its relationship with its meaning. In their evaluation of symbol signs, the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) developed a set of questions to evaluate the symbol signs and which also relates to the evaluation of Identity Marks. Among the questions that apply:

How well does the mark represent the organization?

Do people fail to understand the message that the mark denotes?

Would people of various cultures misunderstand the mark?

Would people of various ages misunderstand this mark?

Is it difficult to understand this mark?

Does the mark contain elements that are unrelated to the message?¹

¹American Institute of Graphic Arts, Symbol Signs (New York: A.I.G.A., 1981), p. 20.

Syntactic

The syntactic aspect of a mark refers to its relationship with its visual environment and other marks. It also evaluates the aesthetic value of the mark. Among the AIGA guidelines for syntactic evaluation:

How does the mark look?

How well do the parts of this mark relate to each other?

How well does this mark relate to other marks?

Is the construction of this mark consistent in its use figure/ground, solid/outline, overlapping, transparency orientation, format, scale, color and texture?

Does this mark use a hierarchy of recognition?

Are the most important elements recognized first?

Is this mark, and its elements, capable of systematic application for a variety of interrelated concepts?²

Pragmatic

The pragmatic aspect refers to the relationship of the mark to its viewer. The AIGA asks:

Is the mark seriously affected by poor lighting, oblique viewing angles and other visual noise?

Does the mark remain visible throughout the range of typical viewing distances?

Can the mark be enlarged and reduced successfully?³

²Ibid., p. 20.

³Ibid., p. 20.

While each area deals with different aspects of the mark, the three are really quite interrelated. Semiotics makes it easier to break down the evaluation of the mark and keep a consistent style of evaluation for all marks. It is important to realize that each mark must be evaluated as to its own situation. The questions given here are meant to show examples of how to approach an evaluation using Semiotics. However the designer must create and answer questions of his or her own, in order to fairly and completely evaluate the mark.

Postscript

The importance given to Identity Marks by large corporations has spread beyond the boundaries of just corporate identity. Today that title is not broad enough to cover the spectrum of what is one of the largest fields in graphic design. The trend that started with big business has spread to small business - and beyond. Almost every organization from every category imaginable sports a mark which identifies it to the public. These groups range from large and small businesses, non-profit organizations such as museums and universities, to restaurants and retail shops, sports franchises, musical groups, zoos and entertainment parks, movies and even special events such seminars and symposiums. With this range of use, it has become important that the terminology used in association with Identity Marks become better unified. Terms have become jumbled over the

years, as words are combined, replaced, or imparted with different meanings. The names used to label types of Identity Marks have become different with every user. This Thesis has attempted to define and group Identity Marks in both visual and verbal terms, in the hope that designers can communicate more effectively within a uniform system of classification.

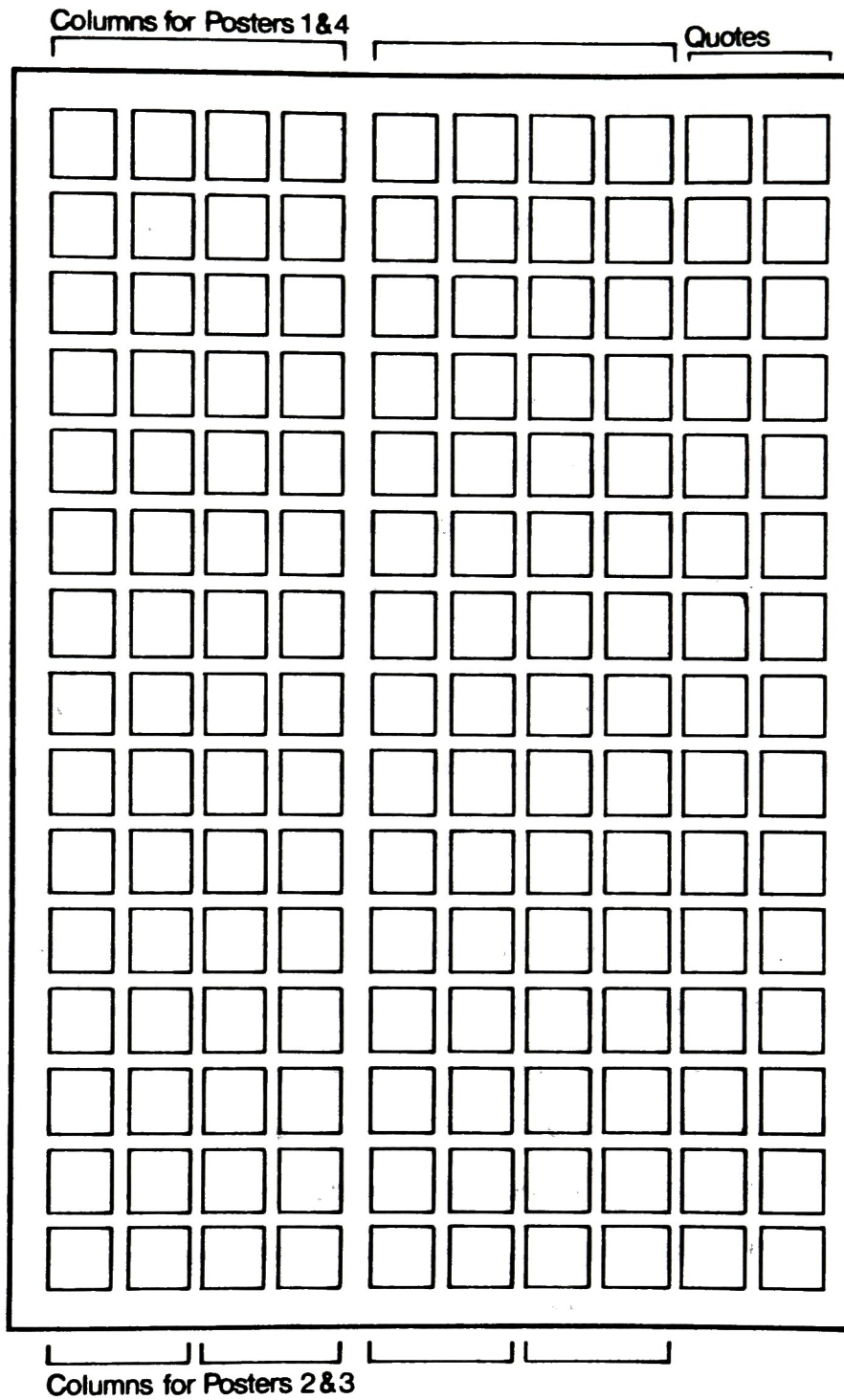
Layout & Design

The next step was to decide on a format in which to present the information. The amount of text led to the choice of a print media, and the desire to create something eye-catching and substantial led to a poster format. Further development and exploration suggested a large scale poster. Because of the difficulties inherent in working on such a large scale, the information was divided to go onto four smaller posters, each of which would be self-sufficient and self-contained, but could combine with the other three to form and function as one large poster. The text information was then logically divided into four corresponding groups: Poster 1 - History and evolution of marks, Group 2 - Symbol Marks, Group 3 - Typographic Marks, and Group 4 - Evaluation of marks and statement of purpose (postscript.)

The design of the posters was based on a ten column grid (Fig. 6). This was subdivided into two columns of four units, with a larger gutter separating the two. These two columns could also be divided into two columns of two units apiece. A column of two units was left along the outside border of each poster.

Black type on a white ground was used for legibility reasons, and to give the illustrations a neutral ground. Green was chosen as the accent color because of my desire to create a more warm, natural and inviting look for the piece, and to avoid giving an 'academic' feel to the piece. All illustrations were reproduced in black, to avoid any semantic

(Fig. 6)



or syntactic problems if the marks were reproduced in the green. A border of a lighter green tint was placed on two of the outside edges of each poster in order to indicate the outside edge of the unified four part poster, when the posters were combined. Helvetica Regular was chosen for the text type for its clean, modern look, and its italic form for the quotes, which were printed in green and placed in the outside two unit column. Avant Garde was used for the heads and subheads, for its sans serif, uniform weight characteristics, and because of rounded, open letterforms, and distinctive, display-face characteristics.

The selection of marks to use to illustrate the posters are discussed in detail in the section following, but there was one overall problem to be dealt with in the mark selection. I had originally planned to illustrate the piece entirely with marks that I had created. As the Thesis moved on, however, it became apparent that I did not have a strong example for every one of the categories that needed to be illustrated. My illustrations, or mark examples, were to be used to show the range of approaches that could be found in the design of each type of mark. I could not entirely show those ranges with the library of marks that I had created. Also considered was the fact that illustrating the text with marks that the reader was familiar with would be more inviting to the viewer. There are also so many beautifully done marks, that I felt that some of them needed to be included. In the end, I compromised. In the situations in

which one of my own marks could accurately and strongly exemplify the characteristic it was intended to show, it would be used. Marks created by other designers were also judged and used in accordance with this guideline.

The following sections will deal with design problems and solutions, and the selection of illustrations on an individual basis for each of the four posters.

Poster 1 (Fig. 7)

This poster consisted mostly of text, concerning the history and evolution of Identity Marks. The text consisted of continuous copy, with no sub-sections. Since the copy was long and continuous, the type was set in the two column format, for easier readability and less up and down eye movement for the viewer. The type was set 11 points, with 2 point leading to help readability. It was set on a 15 pica measure, with a ragged right edge of 1.5 picas.

Since this poster serves as the lead poster of the group, the overall title of 'Identity Marks' was used on this poster, and 'History' as its initial subhead. As 'Identity Marks' serves as the overall title, it was set in a heavier weight of Avant Garde than the other poster heads. The rule width was also increased in order to differentiate this poster head from the others. The quotes used were chosen for their relation to the written copy, as was the case for the quotes on all four posters. (The quotes are listed in Appendix C.)

Identity Marks

History

Just as it is easier to remember a person's face than his name, so it should be easier to remember a company's symbol than its name.

Elmer & Joe Seligman

Man has been using visual symbols to communicate long before he could read or write. Marks became a way to identify goods as being owned or made by one person. The use of marks on objects to identify the maker dates as far back as ancient Greece, where potters' marks found on articles are believed to be 4,000 years old. As trade across the Mediterranean increased, so did the use of identity marks. Brickmakers in Egypt placed their mark on every brick they made. Soapmakers in Rome were fined for selling unbranded soap. The makers of porcelain put their name in a semi-circle as their mark. Stonecutters' marks have been found which used motifs of crescent moons, wheels, grape leaves and other simple motifs.



Mark of a soap maker, ancient

With the advent of 12th century Medieval society in Europe, trade flourished and marks were then used to distinguish between merchants and producers. Commerce marks, which were affixed to trade documents, were used by merchants. Linear representations of the merchants' names were common. These not only served as a mark of ownership, in case of shipwreck or piracy, but as a way to communicate the name and wealth of the merchant.

Producers' marks have been required by law in England since the end of the 12th century. Silversmiths put marks on their works which made it possible to trace the maker's name, the year the piece was made and the place of assay. In 1363, King Edward III ordered that metal workers were to use distinctive marks to identify their work. With the formation of guilds, various guild marks were designated and used in accordance with guild regulations. As guilds became more numerous in late 14th century, the use of producers' marks spread into western Europe. The information conveyed by the marks included materials and processes used; its mandatory use was to guard against unauthorized production and sale and to assure that a work of poor quality could be traced back to the maker.

Other uses of symbols and marks were seen in this era. Noblemen had their heraldry and coats of arms; the Army had its regimental banners and badges; and religious had its own set of symbols. Because of the high rate of illiteracy, symbols and marks were practical as well as decorative.

The Industrial Revolution signaled a change in identity marks. Big business and the machine era made it essential that company identify their products from those of its competitors. The Chicago World's Fair of 1893 introduced new designs, inventions, and manufactures to millions of people and the rush was on to identify these products. The founding families of corporations drew from their family background, travel, their knowledge in the arts and mythology, and native humor to visually identify their products. Note the multitude of family named businesses in the U.S., and the large number of trade figures, such as Buster Brown, the Smith Brothers, or Elsie, the Borden Cow.



Borden's Milk, trademark used in 1909

When a designer creates a trademark his main task is not to produce an attractive work of art. It is to find a shorthand way of communication about the product or service.

Barbara Beer Caplan

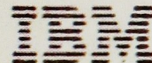
The idea of a uniform corporate look originated in Europe prior to World War I. In Germany, when AEG, the nationwide electric company, expanded into other areas, Peter Behrens designed a typographical mark that combined artistic forms with machine form. This was further developed by the influence of the Bauhaus, which stripped away decoration and historic associations from design forms. Letterforms and marks were now constructed with rulers and compasses, a cleaner style for mass communication. In Italy, Adriano Olivetti, a patron of the arts, realized that a program of design, if applied to every aspect of his company, could influence both workers' morale and public attitudes.



Alfred Adler's design

After World War II efforts were increased to sell American business on design as a sales tool. New marks were created and old ones "cleaned up." The 1950's and 60's saw a further development of corporate identity as an unprecedented number of companies decided to update their corporate symbols. Part of this can be attributed to the growing number of mergers and acquisitions in the business world. Most companies were previously named after their founders, or their major product. With mergers and acquisitions, the company mark, and sometimes the company name, also obsoletes.

The increase in mark design was also helped by the new corporate image-consciousness. Hand in hand with this were the desire to modernize their image and mark. If marks created years before looked out of date, they were redesigned in order to keep up with the times and to better express the new found size and complexity of corporate status. The 1960's also saw a new emphasis on the corporate name as an identity element. Company names were shortened or initialized in order to make names more memorable and decorative. By the late 60's, typographic marks and abstract marks were predominant, despite the fact that the nature of business of the company was not always evident in these marks.



International Business Machines Corp. mark

The early 1970's were a time of low corporate profile. The backlash against big industry and then abstract symbolism caused companies to try for a personal and carefully crafted look. Employing a more casual style, marks became more hand written and embellished. However, the mid-seventies brought back the heavy, abstracted look of corporate symbolism, and with it another increase in mark design. Names continued to be shortened or abbreviated, and new, to each nation and market, came into use.

Some corporations, however, sought to return to their past, to try to bring back some of the old-fashioned values embraced by the public. Trade figures such as the Green Giant, or the Plinkers Peanut Man, were now heavily targeted and promoted by their companies. The reaction of small and medium-sized businesses was also changed. In the 60's, as large corporations unveiled their abstract marks, the smaller businesses followed, with abstract marks that were not always suitable for their purposes. In the early 1980's there has been a swing to more detailed mark designs for the small and medium-sized business, designs which represent products whenever possible.



Evolution of Pepsi logo mark

Identity marks are now in use in almost every type of organization, as interest is no longer confined to industry. With the popularity and usefulness of identity marks, all types of organizations have found that a good visual image can increase public recognition. As Thomas Watson Jr., chairman of IBM once said, "Good design is good business."

The illustrations were used to show Mark development at its different levels. The Potters Mark displays early mark forms. Mr. Peanut exemplifies the use of trade figures. Olivetti is displayed because of its position of one of the first modern corporate marks. IBM demonstrates the change in mark design due to the abbreviation of corporate names, while the evolution of the Pepsi-Cola mark serves to show a specific mark as it changed across the years.

Poster 2 (Fig. 8)

This poster contained information and examples on the Symbol family of Identity Marks. It contained less text than Poster 1, but had more heads and subheads and needed to show more illustrations than Poster 1. Since the text was broken down into smaller chunks of information, the type was set in four columns, by subdividing the two main columns into four smaller columns. The type size was reduced to 10 point, with 2 point leading, because the text was in smaller groups, and to allow for greater flexibility and space in laying out the text, heads and subheads, and illustrations. The main head of the poster, 'Symbols' was placed in the lower left hand corner of the poster. This served to balance the overall main poster, by putting each poster head in the corner of the poster. It also served to better unify the posters, by allowing the eye to flow more easily from the text on one poster to text on another.

Poster 2, as well as Poster 3, relied on a system of

Symbols are marks which function without words or type to convey its message. The message must be conveyed visually, and be understood by mass audience. Symbols can range from an abstract image to an illustrative image of an actual object or person. In all cases it is important to remember that the mark must communicate all of its information visually. While some symbols are

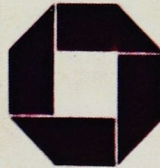
used in conjunction with the name of the organization, the symbol must be able to stand on its own as the visual representation of the organization and its philosophy. Symbols can attract and have quick impact on a viewer, but the viewer must be able to understand and correctly relate the symbol with the organization. Symbols can be broken down into the following categories:

Symbol in which the symbolism is easily identifiable. Letterform symbols are often considered as abstract symbols, but the spread in its use as a more recognizable form of an abstract symbol warrants its separate inclusion. Letterform

symbols have the advantages of abstract symbols, but are more personal and recognizable. Almost always the first initial of an organization's name, they are used mostly in large businesses, and consequently enough to identify themselves.

Abstract

Abstract symbols are symbols that are not pictorial, that is they do not represent an actual object. A majority are based on geometric shapes, and are usually bold, clean and simple. Abstract symbols are mainly related to large corporations with ownership of several smaller companies. They will usually have no direct visual connection with an organization name or product. Instead, an abstract symbol will try to convey a positive association with the organization, its products or services, and its philosophies.



Chase Manhattan Bank, New York

A symbol is a representation which does not aim at being a reproduction.

Gottlieb & Altmeyer

Abstract symbols can convey a sense of prestige to a company because of its corporate image. Good abstract symbols are unique and distinctive and can be identified more quickly than a

Advantages

mark that must be read. Careful use of negative and positive space can, through visual reversal, create a more memorable image and give the symbol a double visual meaning.



Sony, Japan Design Agency Symbolism & Research

Ideally they (trademarks) do not illustrate they indicate. They are not representative but suggest.

Paul Rand

Disadvantages

Abstract symbols need heavy audience exposure for high recognition, which becomes a costly promotional expense. Abstract symbols may be misunderstood by people of different backgrounds and some people feel they are too cold and impersonal. If the symbol is not unique it may cause confusion with abstract symbols of other organizations and must overcome other factors.



Panhandle Petroleum & Refining

Advantages

Letterform symbols are very versatile and can cover a wide range of approaches from highly abstract to almost pictorial. The letterform adds a high recognition factor to the symbol and gives a further relationship with the organization name. Letterform symbols are also more personal than an abstracted form. Alteration of the letterform can add images, meanings, and associations beyond just the letterform.

Disadvantages

While not as costly to produce as an abstract symbol, letterform symbols still need a high number of exposures for recognition. It may come in competition with other marks based on the same letter. Unlike abstract symbols, letterform symbols, which base the mark on the particular shape of a letterform, may limit the number of approaches available to the designer.



Fuchs, Germany Co. Symbolism & Research

Pictorial

Pictorial symbols are symbols based on a visual representation of actual objects. The pictorial symbol may represent a person, animal or object and can be specific or general in its imagery. This type of symbol is highly recognizable, but needs to be tied with the organization name and purpose in a way that serves as a guide for the consumer message to be conveyed. Pictorial symbols may range from a clean, simplified graphic rendering to a illustrative, realistic rendering.



National Geographic Society, George Meeker

Advantages

can visually and clearly show their specific product or service. The designer can use a wide range of elements in representing the image, from an abstracted rendition to a stark realism.

Disadvantages

If the pictorial symbol is done with a complex, illustrative treatment, the symbol may not reproduce well in smaller sizes. As with other symbols, a pictorial symbol needs a relatively high level of exposure in order to insure a high level of recognition.



AS, Symbolism & Research

Symbols



Republic National Bank, New York

size, color and rule size variation to delineate the heads and subheads. The poster heads (Identity Marks, Symbols, Typographic Marks, Evaluation) were printed in green and were set flush against the outside column of the poster, and the rule was run across six column units. The major subject heads (Abstract, Letterform, Pictorial, on Poster 2) were printed in green, run flush left on the text column, and accompanied by an overhead rule which ran across four column units. The subheads (Advantages, Disadvantages) were used in a smaller type size, with a smaller rule which ran across only two column units. This subhead and rule were printed in black and set flush left against the right sub-column to create an unified look.

The placement of illustrations was designed to counter balance the system of head and subhead placement. Illustrations included with the introductory or initial text of the section were placed on the right hand sub-column. Illustrations used with the 'Advantages' and 'Disadvantages' sections were all placed in the left hand sub column. This system of placement, and head treatment was also used in laying out Poster 3.

In each section of this Poster (Abstract, Letterform and Pictorial) at least two illustrations were used. Each mark was chosen for its strong design and visual attractiveness, and also for its appropriateness. For example, in the 'Abstract' section, the Chase Manhattan Mark was used to indicate a straight-edged, bold, impersonal, corporate type

of Abstract Mark, while the Coming of Age Mark was used to show an opposite approach, that of a curvilinear, circular, natural form with more personal warmth, and negative/positive interplay. In the 'Letterform' section, the Redbird Industrial Park Symbol illustrates a strong combination of letter form and pictorial form while the Pharmacraft Mark is more corporate and abstracted. The Foulds Macaroni Mark completes the variety by showing a mark that is first to be recognized as an object, than as an abstraction of a letterform, the letter F. In the 'Pictorial' section, the two marks used, though both of similar subject matter, show the range of technique. The California Conservation Corps Mark is an example of bold, negative/positive shapes, whereas the Merrill Lynch Bull shows a graphic linear, yet illustrative treatment.

Poster 3 (Fig. 9)

This poster dealt with Typographic Marks and its four subgroups; Lettermarks, Logotypes, Combination Marks, and Signatures. Combination Marks and Signatures are technically hybrid marks, but the common denominator in both of these marks is the presence of typographic forms, they were included in the Typographic Marks group.

The system of color, size and placement for heads, subheads and illustrations is the same as for Poster 2, as well as text size and treatment, and already discussed. Also as with Poster 2, the marks examples were chosen to

Typographic marks include any mark in which the name of the organization is represented in typographic form. These marks are highly recognizable and need less exposure than symbols because the company name is presented in word form. Typographic marks are used in almost every

category of business and organization. The typeface used in these marks is a standard face, is a face designed especially for the mark. With the number of existing type faces, and the possibility of creating a new face, the variety of approaches to typographic mark design is very broad.

Typographic Marks

Lettermark

Lettermarks are marks in which the initials or acronym of an organization are formed by two or more letters. In most cases the shortened version of the name is more recognizable than the formal name. Because the lettermark usually consists of few letters, often the typeforms can be more distinctively designed than type used from an existing typeface. More



General Telephone & Electronics
American Corporation

easily recognized and understood than symbols, lettermarks are used by a wide range of organizations.

Advantages

The initials or acronym that make up the lettermark are usually more recognizable than the full organization name. Lettermarks are less visually complex than marks using full words, and are usually easier to handle. The type-

forms in lettermarks can be treated as separate elements, since the mark doesn't have to be read as a cohesive word unit. Lettermarks use typographic forms, which already have certain associations built into them.

Disadvantages

Some people feel that initials and acronyms are too impersonal. The association with shortened corporate names can sometimes be negative. Lettermarks have to compete as a design environment full of typeforms, so good letter marks need to be both distinctive and legible in order to avoid confusion.



Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)

Logotype

A logotype is a typographic mark in which the organization name is expressed in one or more words. This mark allows for very high recognition as the full name is presented to the viewer. It also has the highest range of applications, from corporations to restaurants. The typography can

either be designed specifically for the mark, or taken from an existing typeface. Since the logotype is primarily visible, it adds a physical dimension to the mark. The logotype is best used by organizations who have distinctive names, or have the money or to promote their mark.

Advantages

The logotype is easy to promote and easily recognized, since it clearly spells out the name of the organization. Since it can be rendered in an existing typeface or a specially created one, the designer is given a wide range of options to work with. The logotype is good for organizations in which the name gives an indication of the products or services offered.

Disadvantages

Logotypes must fight for attention with all the other type in the visual environment. Logotypes of unusual or lengthy words may incur some type relationship problems. They must balance between

being distinctive and being readable. Logotypes consisting of long or multiple words may become too complex and legible at smaller

sizes. Some confusion may result between logotypes using similar typefaces.

Combination Mark

A combination mark is a mark which incorporates both a typographic mark and a graphic element. The typographic mark can be a lettermark or logotype, while the graphic element can be from any of the symbol categories. The combination mark cohesively combines the symbol and the typography, and is sometimes confused with the signature. It allows for instant recognition of the symbol.



Nike, Inc.

and the addition of the symbol to the typographic mark can make the mark more distinctive and memorable.

Advantages

The symbol need not have a direct visual relationship with the company name, product or service. The symbol helps to enhance the typography, and makes it stand out from a strictly typographic mark.

Disadvantages

The use of both a symbol and a typographic mark may be redundant. The combination mark may become too complex if both elements are complex, or awkward if the elements are not visually compatible. If the symbol or typographic mark is used solely for variety, a combination mark may cause confusion because of the existence of different versions of the same basic mark.



Second Cotton Company (Cotton) (Cotton)

Signature

Signatures are similar to and often confused with combination marks. It differs in that the organization mark, symbolic or typographic in nature, is presented with the full, official name of the organization. The mark is used, on its own in most applications, but it is labeled with the organization's full name for certain applications. The name is usually rendered in a clean, simple typeface, so it doesn't compete with



Levi Strauss & Co.
San Francisco, California

the mark itself. Signatures are used with both symbolic marks and typographic marks.

Advantages

Mark and is useful for situations in which the full name must be associated with the mark.

Disadvantages

and long organization names may be too visually complex. Care must be taken to ensure that the typography does not compete with the mark.

Each line of letters had to tie a unit, to form a single and not a scattered silhouette, to be balanced by the eye.

Ben Shahn

The greatest effort is made to assure that each trademark design will be appropriate to the purpose of the business, or institution it represents, and meaningful to the audience it will be seen by.

John C. Herzog & Co.
New York City



John C. Herzog & Co.

illustrate a range of approaches. For the 'Lettermark' section, GTE was used to indicate a simple lettermark reversed out of a fixed field. The PBS mark represents a positive mark which has been slightly altered to enhance its appearance and effectiveness. In the 'Logotype' section the Catcher in the Rye Logotype was used to illustrate that logotypes can be of multiple word structure, and are not restricted to just company or organization names. The Eaton Mark shows a basic corporate application, but it is a look and negative/positive interplay that is often copied but never as successfully. The section on 'Combination Marks' has two examples; one, the Nike Mark, which combines the corporate symbol with the corporate logotype, and the Cotton Council Mark, reversed out of a fixed field, which combines the name with an illustrative flourish. The 'Signature' section, being fairly straight forward, contained only one example, the Levi Strauss Signature. The Signature adequately shows the relationship between mark and signature, and illustrates that even typographic marks can be used in a signature.

This poster was the most difficult to handle, in terms of layout and organization, because of the greater amount of sections and illustrations than in Poster 2. This was compensated for by using smaller illustrations that also were of a horizontal rectangular format, rather than the square format of Poster 2. This served to help keep Poster 3 from getting too cluttered and confusing.

Poster 4 (Fig. 10)

The text of this poster contained the evaluation of marks and also a postscript to the poster information. The design variable of this poster were very similar to Poster 1, and therefore allowed for the same layout approach. The text was set in 11/13, and run across the full four unit column. The major heads, Semantic, Syntactic, Pragmatic, and Postscript, were all printed in green, but only Semantic and Postscript had the accompanying overhead rules, since the Semantic, Syntactic and Pragmatic heads were meant to be included in the same section. The chart that dealt with budget considerations in the selection of marks was based on a chart done by Gregg Berryman. The text and layout of the chart was altered to fit the concept and layout of the piece. The chart was chosen for its effective illustration of one theme, eye or eyes, being run through the range of approaches in Identity Marks.

Identify marks need to be evaluated in two different categories. The mark first needs to be examined by how appropriate the type of mark is in relation to the organizational needs and applications. Second, the mark needs to be evaluated in regard to aesthetic considerations and design requirements.

Certain types of organizations lend themselves to particular types of marks. Organizations which seek a more personal image should think more towards a typographic mark. This also applies to organizations in which their name relates to or reveals the nature of the organization, its products or services. Organizations with a variety of interests or subdivisions should think along the lines of an abstract symbol. This list of considerations goes on and on, and is unique to every organization.

One of the most important considerations involving the choice of marks involves the organizational budget. Certain types of marks need constant and frequent exposure in order to be effective and recognizable. Symbols and non-typographic marks fall into the category of marks that need large amounts of promotion dollars. Typographic marks or those pictorial symbols need less exposure, and therefore less dollars. The design of identity marks has become big business for graphic designers, and a good design firm can help to design an attractive, effective and appropriate mark.

High Abstraction

Requires many exposures for high recognition. Needs large budget.

Abstract Symbols



Abstract Form

Lettermarks



Letters & Typeforms

Low Abstraction

Low budgets make quick recognition necessary. Needs fewer exposures.

Logotypes



Phonic Name

Pictorial Symbols



Simplified Picture



Altered Picture



Illustrative Picture

The second area of evaluation is in the design qualities of the mark. An effective, organized way to accomplish this is through the system of Semantics. Semantics is a rational system for the analysis of design and communication problems. The system is divided into three components, each of which deals with a particular area of evaluation.

Semantic

The semantic aspect of a mark involves its relationship with its meaning. In their evaluation of symbol signs, the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) developed a set of questions to evaluate the symbol signs and which also relate to the evaluation of identity marks. Among the questions:

- How well does this mark represent the organization?
- Do people fail to understand the message that the mark denotes?
- Would people of various cultures misunderstand this mark?
- Would people of various ages misunderstand this mark?
- Is it difficult to understand this mark?
- Does the mark contain elements that are unrelated to the message?

Syntactic

The syntactic aspect of a mark refers to its relationship with its visual environment and other marks. It also evaluates the aesthetic value of the mark. Among the AIGA guidelines for syntactic evaluation:

- How does the mark look?
- How well do the parts of this mark relate to each other?
- How well does this mark relate to other marks?
- Is the construction of this mark consistent in its use of typographical subdivisions, overlapping, transparency, color, texture, format, scale, color and texture?
- Does this mark use a hierarchy of recognition?
- Are the most important elements recognized first?
- Is this mark and its elements capable of systematic application for a variety of informational messages?

Pragmatic

The pragmatic aspect refers to the relationship of the mark to its viewer. The AIGA asks:

- Is the mark seriously affected by poor lighting, oblique viewing angles and other visual noise?
- Does the mark remain visible throughout the range of typical viewing distances?
- Is the mark difficult to reproduce?
- Can the mark be enlarged and reduced successfully?

While each area deals with different aspects of the mark, the three are really quite interrelated. Semantics makes it easier to break down the evaluation of the mark and keep a consistent style of evaluation for all marks. It is important to note that each mark must be evaluated as to its own situation. The questions given here are meant to show examples of how to approach an evaluation using semantics. However, the designer must create and answer questions of his or her own, in order to fairly and completely evaluate the mark.

Postscript

The importance given to identity marks by large corporations has spread beyond the boundaries of just corporate identity. Today that title is not broad enough to cover the spectrum of what is one of the largest fields in graphic design. The trend that started with big business has spread to small businesses and beyond. Almost every organization from every category imaginable sports a mark which identifies it to the public. These groups range from large and small businesses, non-profit organizations such as museums and universities, to restaurants and retail shops, sports franchises, musical groups, movie and entertainment parks, shows and even special events such as seminars and symposiums. With this range of use, it has become important that the terminology used in association with identity marks become better unified. Terms have become jumbled over the years, as words are combined, replaced, or imparted with different meanings. The names used to label types of identity marks have become different with every user. This thesis has attempted to define and group identity marks in both visual and verbal terms, in the hope that designers can communicate more effectively within a uniform system of classification.

Therefore each design, while simple in form, is the culmination of a complex process and is tailored to

from Christopher & Christopher

Many classifications systems exist, developed by graphic designers, art historians, and psychologists. Each taken together can lead to confusion and controversy.

Gregg Roseman

The terminology used in the mark (corporate identity) is for the most part loose and sloppy. The phrases are all used more or less interchangeably and indiscriminately by many people.

Wally Clark

Evaluation

Since Posters 1 and 4 were so similar to each other, as were Posters 2 and 3, it allowed for a layout that combined both variety and symmetry, to allow for a nice balance and unity in the total layout of the four posters combined (Fig. 11). The variety of column widths and treatment in the posters helps to avoid any visual monotony. The visual texture of mainly text posters (Posters 1 and 4), was balanced by the two posters (Posters 2 and 3) which contained more illustrations and heads, and different column widths. All in all, the layout system allowed for visual variety, along with balance and unity.

Production Processes

Process and design became intertwined, as the actual type was set to aid in the layout, and reset as copy and line measure were adjusted or changed. All of the typesetting was done myself on a Mergenthaler Omnitech. Heads and subheads were done with Geotype transfer type, and photostatted to appropriate sizes, as were all the mark illustrations. Mechanicals were assembled on a full scale 12" x 18" format, then shot onto a positive film, for use in the screen printing process. Since the total printing could not be completed by the time of my show opening, the pieces in the show were photostats, with color I.N.T. film and color Pantone paper to add the appropriate color. The screen printing was done on campus, with the invaluable help of Robert Webster, Professor of Screen Printing in the School of Printing, College of Graphic Arts and Photography. All stages of the screen printing process were personally done, including screen preparation and creation and press operation. Twenty sets of the posters were printed. The decision to print the Thesis was made out of my desire to create a sense of permanence to the piece that printing gives it, and a desire to personally see the Thesis through the entire process from creation to reproduction.

Conclusions

My thesis show statement, which follows, accurately and succintly describes what I was attempting to accomplish in this thesis. I am pleased with the result. I feel that the information is important and timely, and is presented in an informative and visually pleasing format. The classification system which is included in this thesis is my attempt to create some order in what is sometimes a confusing area of graphic design. People will disagree with some of my ideas, I'm sure, but I feel that the system is a good solution to the defined problem within the parameters that were established. It is my feeling that this accumulation and presentation of information does indeed offer something new to the profession of graphic design.

The Thesis also gave me an experience that was not included in the thesis proposal; the process of running a project in every step of the way, from research, writing, design, typesetting, mechanical art, and printing. It became a culminating experience for what I hoped to accomplish in my education; knowing not only how to design, but how that design is produced, and how to do it myself. The knowledge of process influences design, and, in the end, improves the final product.

Thesis Show Statement

What you see before you is my attempt to clarify the definitions and terminology used to classify Identity Marks. Through my research I have found a multitude of complete and incomplete classification systems, with over thirty different terms used altogether. My system is based on the visual characteristics and components of the marks, and the terminology used was selected on the basis of recognition, common usage, and accuracy. Mine is not a complex system; its audience is designers and its aim is to simplify and inform. The overall work, four individual posters which can function as individually or as a set, aims to give practical information about Identity Marks, and their history, uses, advantages and disadvantages, and how to evaluate. Most of all, as all good design should, it aims to communicate.

Credits

Special thanks must go to my three Thesis committee members, Roger Remington, Joe Watson, and Heinz Klinkon, for not only the help they have been to me in this project, but for all the things they have taught me while I have been here at RIT. I must give great thanks to Bob Webster, who has exercised great patience and understanding in trying to make a graphic designer into a screen printer. My appreciation is also conveyed to Harold Scharmberg, for his help and advice on many production problems and difficulties. Of course, in some small way, every teacher and administrator I have run into during my time at RIT has some part in this Thesis.

On the personal side there are many people who did not have a hand in helping me design this Thesis, but in their own ways helped me to complete it. Most of all, they helped to keep me sane. I must of course thank my family, my father, Gordon, and my brother Gordon, Jr. for all their support (both financial and spiritual) and patience for the 'artist' in the family. I thank my late mother, Joyce, for the strength to try. My great thanks go to the Saevas, Jerry and Joan, and son Jerry, for being my second family and granting me all the benefits of being in that family. Most of all I must thank my wife-to-be, and best friend Grace, who has always been there when things looked the worst.

APPENDIX A

Poster Specifications and Technical Information.

Number: 4

Size: 12" x 18" per poster
24" x 36" (2' x 3') for posters combined.

Typography: Text: set on Merganthaler Omnitech
Helvetica Regular
Helvetica Regular Italic

Heads: Avant Garde Medium
Avant Garde Bold

Process: Screen Printed

Screen

Info: Material: Polyester
Mesh count: 378
Color: orange

Inks: Black: Sinclair & Valentine SS Zephyrset 700
Green: Wiederhold Sieb-Druckfarben HG 100 GR
Light Green: Wiederhold HG 152 GR

Size of

Run: 20 Prints

Mark

Designers: **General Telephone & Electronics:** Arnold Copeland, 1971.

Eaton Corp.: Lippincott & Margulies, 1971.

National Cotton Council: Walter Landor Assoc. 1973.

Chase Manhattan: Tom Geismar, 1963.

California Conservation Corps: Michael Vanderbyl.

Merrill Lynch: Martella.

Foulds Macaroni Company: Goldsholl Assoc.

Planters Peanut Man: Designer unknown, 1916.

The Catcher in the Rye: Brian Bennett, 1984.

Coming of Age: Brian Bennett, 1982.

Olivetti: Adriano Olivetti.

International Business Machines: Paul Rand.

Pharmacraft: Brian Bennett, 1981.

Public Broadcasting System: Ernie Smith.

Redbird Industrial Park: Don Day.

Nike, Inc.: Designer unknown.

Levi Strauss & Inc.: Brian Bennett, 1983.

Pepsi Cola: First Pepsi Logo, Caleb Bingham, 1898.

Current Mark: Gould & Assoc. 1969.

APPENDIX B

Listing of quotations

"When a designer creates a trademark his main task is not to create an attractive work of art... it is to find a shorthand way of communication about the product or service."

Barbara Baer Capitman

"The trademark is a symbol of a corporation. It is not a sign of quality...it is a sign of the quality."

Paul Rand

"Just as it easier to remember a person's face than his name, so it should be easier to remember a company's symbol than its name."

Elinor & Joe Selame

"A symbol is a representation which does not aim at being a reproduction."

Goblet d'Alvielle

"Ideally they (trademarks) do not illustrate, they indicate. They are not representational but suggestive."

Paul Rand

"The greatest effort is made to assure that each trademark design will be appropriate to the purpose of the business or institution it represents, and meaningful to the audiences it will be seen by."

Ivan Chermayeff & Tom Geismar

"Each line of letters had to be a unit, to form a single and not a scattered silhouette, to be balanced by the eye."

Ben Shahn

"Therefore each design, though simple in form, is the culmination of a complex process we believe in."

Ivan Chermayeff & Tom Geismar

"Many classification systems exist, developed by graphic designers, anthropologists and psychologists...(which) taken together can lead to confusion and redundancy."

Gregg Berryman

"The terminology used in the trade (corporate identity) is for the most part loose and sloppy. The phrases...are all used more or less interchangeably and indiscriminately by many people."

Wally Olins

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